

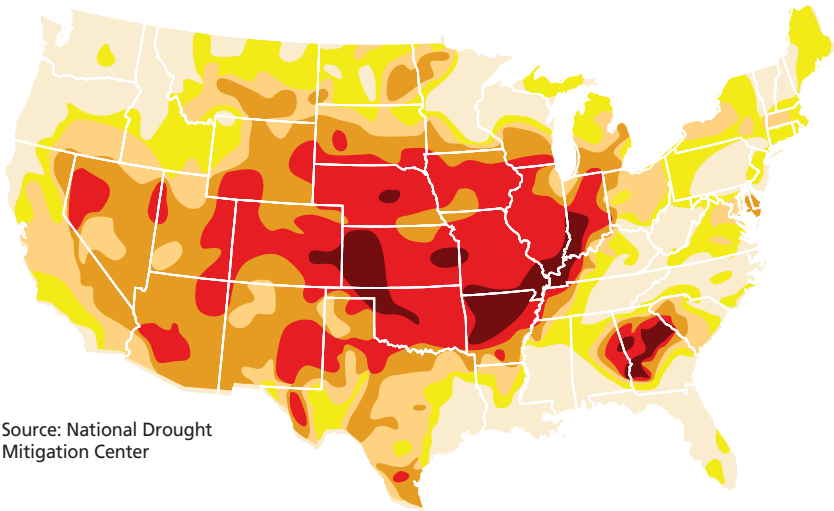
# A DROUGHT FOR THE AGES

The drought of 2012 now ranks among the most severe droughts in the 140 years of recorded meteorological history in the U.S. From its beginnings in the Southwestern U.S. last summer, the drought has spread north through the wheat country of Oklahoma and Kansas into the Corn Belt from Nebraska to Ohio. That's the world's largest corn-producing area. Iowa, the No. 1 corn-producing state, last year tallied 20 percent of the U.S. crop. The U.S. typically produces about one-third of the world's crop.

## CURRENT DROUGHT CONDITIONS

The 2012 drought has been compared to historic droughts in 1988, 1956 and the granddaddy of all U.S. droughts, 1936. What has made the 2012 drought particularly damaging is its wide coverage. Through midsummer, about three-quarters of the U.S. was either abnormally dry or in drought condition.

KEY: ■ Abnormally dry ■ Severe ■ Exceptional  
■ Moderate ■ Extreme



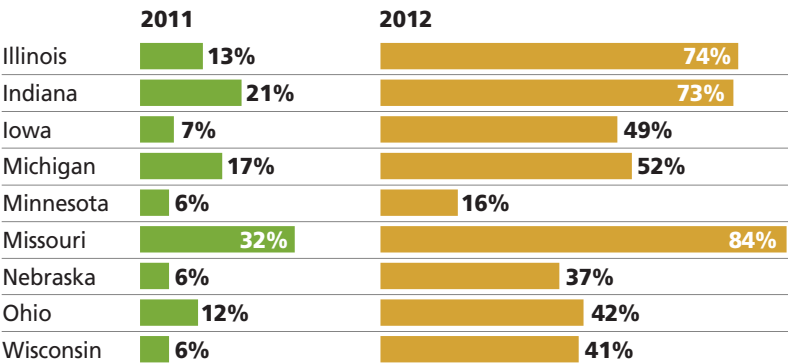
Source: National Drought Mitigation Center

## CROP CONDITIONS DECLINE IN MIDWEST

The drought has dropped the condition of the U.S. corn crop dramatically this summer. U.S. Department of Agriculture "poor" to "very poor" ratings have increased significantly in the major corn-growing states of Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska and Missouri.

First week of August :

### POOR TO VERY POOR CONDITIONS FOR CORN



Source: USDA

## CORN PLANTS: THE GOOD AND THE BAD

Motorists have noticed corn so dry and yellow that it looks ready to harvest weeks early. The real problem is inside the ears, which are smaller and have fewer kernels than the 600-800 in a plant with adequate moisture.



A good ear of corn will have between 600 and 800 kernels. This year too many ears of corn will not reach that total. A plant with a lot of moisture will retain a bright green color. With less moisture, stalks turn yellow and leaves curl and wither.

## NATIONAL CROP EXPECTATIONS

The USDA predicted 166 bushels per acre in spring at planting time, lowered it to 146 bushels per acre in July, and lowered it again Friday.

	2011	2012 forecast
Corn harvested	84.4 million acres	87.4 million acres
National yield	148 bushels per acre	123.4 bushels per acre
Total production	12.36 billion bushels	10.8 billion bushels

Source: USDA

## CONSUMERS CAN EXPECT PRICE INCREASES

Brace for higher food prices next year, especially for meat. Livestock producers can't afford to buy corn that costs \$8 per bushel, so they'll add as few new animals as possible.

FOOD INFLATION

**For consumers**, the drought means a resumption in the rise of food inflation that has been greater than the overall inflation rate of 2 percent this year and the 1.9 percent projected for 2013. Food inflation was 3.7 percent last year but is estimated to increase by 4-5 percent in 2013.

POULTRY

**The U.S. Department of Agriculture** says poultry is expected to be among the first to reflect price increases due to the drought, with price increases revised upward from 3.5 to 4.5 percent in 2012.

BEEF AND PORK

**Beef and pork consumers** may not notice much difference in the last months of 2012 as the nation's feedlots and packing-houses are flooded with animals whose owners don't want to pay higher feed costs.

CATTLE

**But next year**, cattle supplies will tighten. Meat prices may increase as much as 5-6 percent compared with the 2-3 percent increases this year.

MILK

**The price of milk** may rise as much as 10 percent next year as owners produce fewer calves. Prices for cheese and other dairy products will increase as well.

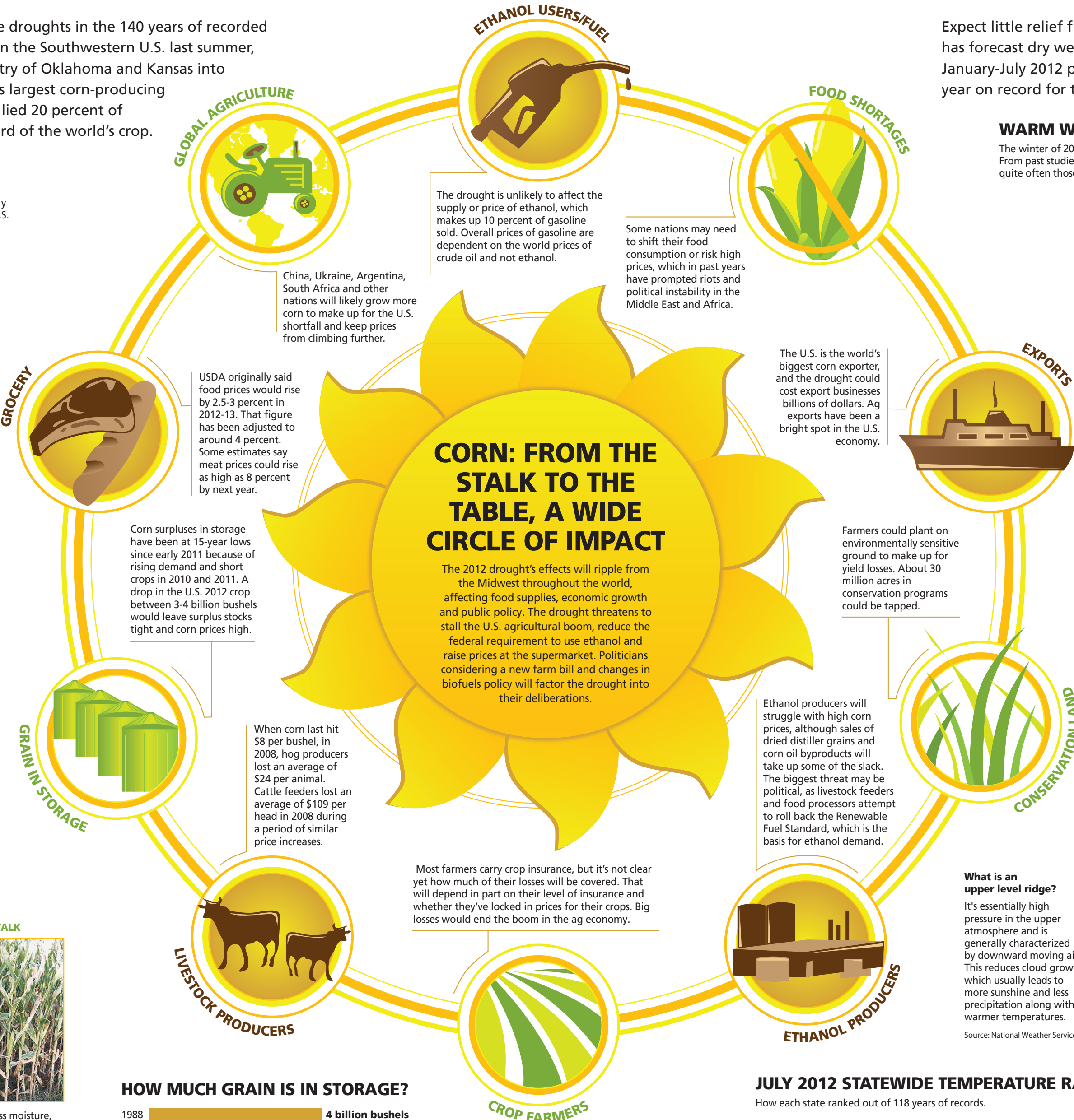
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

**Fruit and vegetable prices** aren't expected to jump, the USDA said. They tend to be grown in areas away from the Midwest-centered drought and usually are irrigated.

BREAD

**Bread prices will jump** thanks to a 45 percent increase in the price of wheat.

INFORMATION COMPILED BY DAN PILLER AND GRAPHIC BY KATIE KUNERT/THE REGISTER



Expect little relief from the drought. The National Weather Service has forecast dry weather through the end of September. Already, the January-July 2012 period was the warmest first seven months of any year on record for the U.S., and the 15th-driest.

## WARM WINTERS BRING WARM SUMMERS

The winter of 2011-12 is ranked as one of the warmest winters ever recorded for the nation. From past studies, such winters are always followed by warmer-than-normal summers, and quite often those summers are among the warmest ever.

## JULY 2012 IOWA WEATHER FACTS

**79.7°**

Average Iowa 24-hour temperature, which is 6.1 degrees above normal.

**1.24 inches**

Total rainfall, which is 3.23 inches below normal.

**1936**

Last year on record with a hotter July. This July is third-warmest in 140-year history of record-keeping.

**11%**

Home air-conditioning requirements, estimated by cooling day totals, were 11 percent greater than July 2011 (a hot month) and 69 percent greater than normal.

**July 23**

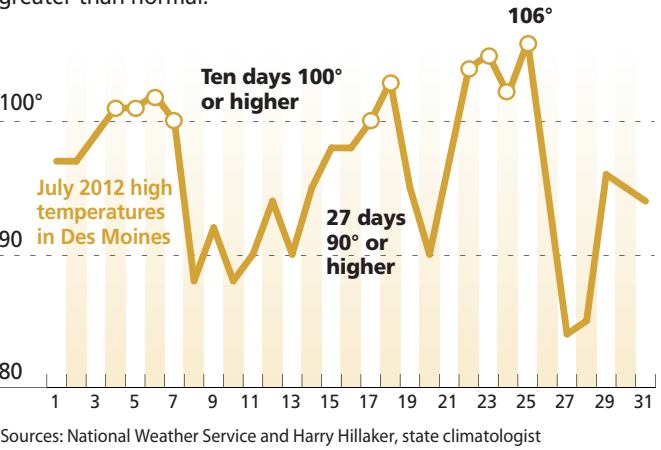
On this day, Donnellson, Fairfield and Keokuk reported highest temperature: 107 degrees. (Keokuk holds state record of 118, set in 1934).

**21**

Number of days with daily high temperatures of 90 degrees or more. Three of those days were 100 degrees or more. A typical year brings 23 days of 90 degree heat with one day reaching 100.

**10**

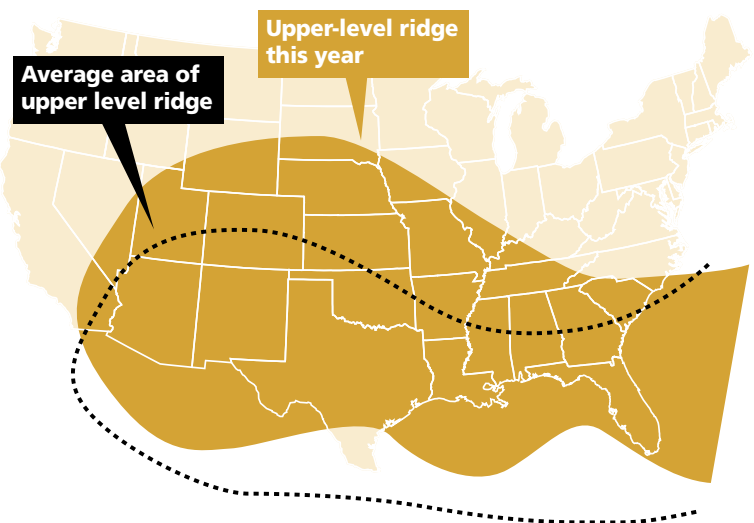
Number of days with triple-digit temperatures in July.



Sources: National Weather Service and Harry Hillaker, state climatologist

## WHY SO HOT AND DRY?

The upper-level ridge that normally is located near New Mexico shifted northeast into Kansas. This allowed the hot, dry air normally across the Southwest United States to shift into the Central Plains and Midwest.



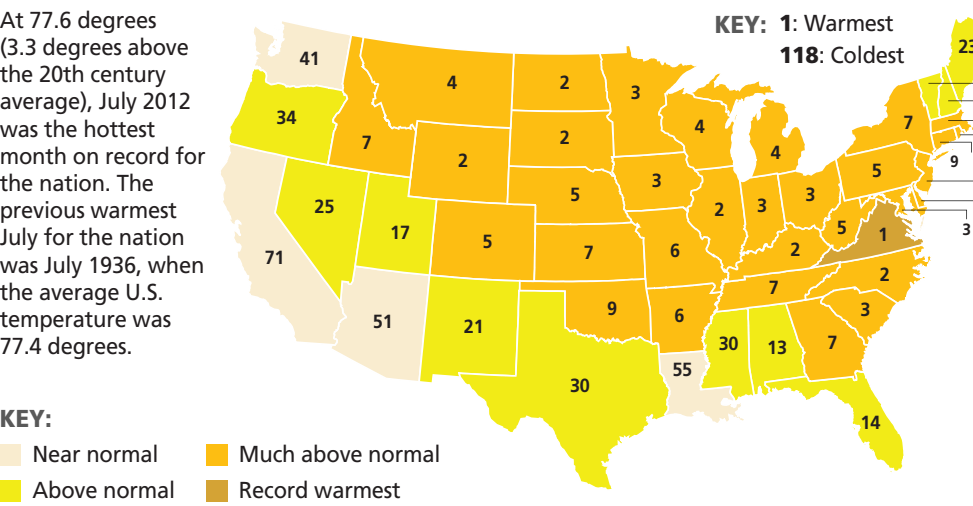
### What is an upper level ridge?

It's essentially high pressure in the upper atmosphere and is generally characterized by downward moving air. This reduces cloud growth, which usually leads to more sunshine and less precipitation along with warmer temperatures.

Source: National Weather Service

## JULY 2012 STATEWIDE TEMPERATURE RANK

How each state ranked out of 118 years of records.



KEY:

Near normal ■ Much above normal  
Above normal ■ Record warmest

## JULY 2012 STATEWIDE PRECIPITATION RANK

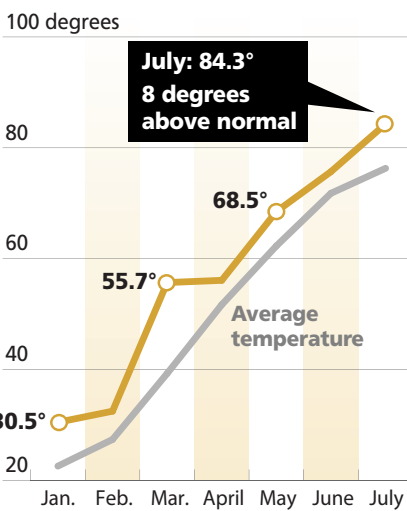
The nation's average precipitation total of 2.57 inches was 0.19 inch below average.

KEY:

Much below normal ■  
Below normal ■  
Near normal ■  
Above normal ■  
Much above normal ■

Sources: National Climatic Data Center and National Weather Service

## AVERAGE DES MOINES TEMPS



## AVERAGE DES MOINES PRECIP

